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The Mecklin letters written
in 1863-64 at Mt. Comfort

**Washington County
Historical Society
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

**The Mecklin Letters
Written in 1863-64 at Mt. Comfort**

by
Robert W. Mecklin

**Bulletin #10
1955
W.J. Lemke, Editor**

Washington County Historical Society
118 E. Dickson
Fayetteville, Ar 72701

It is with considerable pride that we present our latest discovery in Washington County history -- the diary of Robert W. Mecklin, for the years 1863-1864. This diary is in the form of letters to his wife's sister, Katherine Anderson Benson, who, with her husband, A.K. Benson, was a refugee in town during the war years.

The importance of the Mecklin material lies in the fact that it gives a picture of the life of civilians during the war and of the activities of the bands of bushwhackers that roamed over Washington and Benton counties.

The author of these letters was Robert W. Mecklin, one of Fayetteville's earliest school teachers and founder of the Ozark Institute at Mt. Comfort. Mecklin's adventures began when he was 18 when he began his week-by-week record -- his diary -- to remain in the town at Mt. Comfort with little more than his rifle and a few letters from home -- he had no family at that time.

THE MECKLIN LETTERS

written in 1863-64 at Mt. Comfort

by ROBERT W. MECKLIN,

the Founder of Ozark Institute

The events narrated by Mecklin took place in Washington County, in the early part of the war, when the bushwhackers were active in the south. In 1863, the bushwhackers were active in the south, and in 1864, they were active in the north.

The originals of the Mecklin letters are in the possession of Miss Katherine Benson of Fayetteville and Mr. Robert Benson of Paris. They are grandchildren of Katherine Anderson Benson -- the "Katherine" of Mecklin's letters. The letters were mailed for us through the courtesy of Alvin Benson of Fayetteville, who is president of the Benton County Historical Society.

To appreciate the Mecklin letters and to properly place them in their historical setting, it is necessary to read the preceding pages of the edition that they narrate. The Mecklin material is a part of the life of Robert W. Mecklin, their witness and their friend. Mecklin was born in 1845, and he was a teacher in the Fayetteville schools. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues.

Robert W. Mecklin, the author of these letters, was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues.

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Fayetteville, Arkansas

1955

W. J. Lemke, editor

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FOREWORD

It is with considerable pride that we present our latest discovery in Washington County history -- the diary of Robert W. Mecklin for the years 1863-1864. This diary is in the form of letters to his wife's sister, Katherine Anderson Dinsmore, who, with her husband, A.W.Dinsmore, was a refugee in Texas during the war years.

The importance of the Mecklin material lies in the fact that it gives a picture of the life of civilians during the war and of the activities of the bands of bushwhackers that roamed over Washington and Benton counties.

The author of these letters was Robert W. Mecklin, one of Fayetteville's earliest school teachers and founder of the Ozark Institute at Mt. Comfort. Mecklin's advanced age -- he was 68 when he began this week-by-week record -- made it possible for him to remain in his home at Mt. Comfort with little fear of physical harm. Also -- as the letters show -- he had the loving protection of a courageous wife and daughters.

The events narrated by the old schoolmaster occurred mostly in Washington County, in a small area extending from Fayetteville on the south to Osage Creek on the north, and from Holcomb's farm, east on the Wire Road, to Cincinnati on the west.

The originals of the Mecklin letters are in the possession of Miss Katherine Watson of Bentonville and Mr. Clement Watson of Tulsa. They are grandchildren of Katherine Anderson Dinsmore -- the "Sister Kate" of Mecklin's letters. The letters were copied for us through courtesy of Alvin Seamster of Bentonville, who is president of the Benton County Historical Society.

To appreciate the Mecklin letters and to properly place them in their historical setting, it is necessary to know the dramatis personae of the action that they narrate. The Mecklin household consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Mecklin, their widowed daughter Mary E. and her three children, and the Mecklins' younger daughter Lou. There were also three Negro servants on the farm. Wesley, "under 45", helped with the outdoor work. Net, who had two children, did the cooking until she succumbed to the lure of cash money in Fayetteville. After Net and her children moved to town, Rindy (Merinda) helped with the cooking and other house work.

Robert W. Mecklin, the writer of these letters, was born in South Carolina, July 31, 1795. He attended college in Athens, Georgia, then moved to Kentucky where he married Louisa Ann Anderson in 1829. They came to Arkansas in 1833. Mecklin taught briefly in Little Rock, then took charge of the Fayetteville Female Academy in the latter part of 1835. He then taught school in the church at Mt. Comfort, where he opened his noted school, Ozark Institute, on May 19, 1845. He had purchased the unfinished building of Far West Academy and had completed the brick building. He was elected State Senator in 1860. He died at his home in Mt. Comfort on April 25, 1871.

Mrs. Mecklin was Louisa Ann Anderson, one of three daughters of Hugh A. Anderson of Kentucky who had brought his family to Benton County, Arkansas, in 1836. Mrs. Mecklin's sisters, both mentioned frequently in these letters, were Katherine Anderson (Mrs. A. W.) Dinsmore -- she was the "Aunt Kate" to whom the letters were addressed; and Elizabeth Anderson (Mrs. Hiram) Davis, who is referred to in these letters as "Sister E." There was a fourth Anderson sister, Mary Jane (Mrs. Nathan M. Moran), who is not mentioned in the letters.

The "Mary E." of Robert Mecklin's letters was his daughter, Mary Elizabeth. She was the widow of William Fullbright, who was killed while in the Confederate service, leaving her with three small children. She died shortly after the war and the Mecklins kept the children during their lifetime. "Lou", mentioned frequently in these letters, was the Mecklins' younger daughter, Louisa. She later married James Hoge and moved to New Mexico.

Mrs. Mecklin's sister Elizabeth (Mrs. Hiram Davis) lived about two miles from Mt. Comfort and had a household of her own. She had two little children at home, two sons in the Southern army (one was a son by her first marriage to Albert Peel), and a husband and one son "in the South" (as refugees). Also, she had a Negro servant named Delia. Mrs. Mecklin visited her sister, Mrs. Davis, frequently, riding her "pony" from Mt. Comfort to the Davis home.

"Sister Kate", to whom Robert Mecklin's letters are addressed, was the wife of Alexander Winchester Dinsmore. She was an invalid when the war broke out, so Mr. Dinsmore took his family to Texas, where he was Procurement Agent for the Quartermaster Department of the Confederate army.

The Mecklins' neighbors also play an important part in these letters, especially the McCormicks, Gunninghams, Nolens and Moores.

The geographical setting for this account of the violence of 1863-64 was northwest Arkansas, torn by civil strife, occupied by invaders, and plundered by lawless bands who made no distinction between North and South.

The Mecklins lived in a house on the campus of Ozark Institute at Mt. Comfort, 3 miles northwest of Fayetteville. The 2-story brick school building that Robert Mecklin had purchased and completed in 1845 was still standing and was occupied in 1863 by a family with Union sympathies. Neither the brick Institute building nor the Mecklin home were destroyed during the war. Although Robert Mecklin himself was too old to resume teaching after hostilities ceased, Ozark Institute did carry on after its founder's death in 1871.

THE MECKLIN LETTERS

Fayetteville, 9 Aug. 1863

Dear Sister Kate:

It is long since we heard from you and I have sat down this morning to stir you up that you may write and let us hear how you are. You must not fault me for a breach of the Sabbath: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." This portion of the commandment has been much neglected since the war began. But "Six days shalt thou labor and do all they work" had been strictly attended to by us, that Sunday alone is left for writing to our friends.

We are still alive, enjoy our usual health; have never yet been hungry without enough of wholesome food to satisfy us and the prospects of plenty to do us another year if the Federals do not take it from us. The Lord has been good to us of the South. While our soil has been stained with the blood of both our friends and enemies, while every command of the decalogue has been neglected and openly violated, he has been bountifully watering our lands, causing them to bring forth plentiful crops of grain and every seed and plant committed to them to spring forth in plentiful crops to feed us. Since sitting down to write it has commenced to rain; the very shower for our turnips sown. We have better crops of grain and vegetables with less labor than is common in this upland country. Our patches are small but we shall have plenty if the armies do not consume it. Plenty of large white drumhead cabbage since the first of July, and almost every other vegetable heart could wish. I saw Rindy early this morning putting a beet into the wash kettle, having no other vessel large enough to receive it. You may think us doing well, and we would be, did we not always have to keep out our pickets to keep the enemy off our hidden stores. But enough of this. Something to wear comes next.

Well, we are still comfortably clad, though some of us may have to go barefoot next winter for the want of leather and shoemakers. Our women patch our old clothes and make us new ones, while themselves are comfortably and neatly dressed in garments of their own manufacture. The southern women left in this part of our state are seeing hard times but most of them bear the hardship with patience and fortitude. They will live in story, aye will they, till their grandchildren have reached their dotage. Some for their kindness and hospitality to the sick and wounded. Some for their skill and success in hiding their provisions to subsist on and for concealing, feeding and aiding our weary way-worn soldiers and their scouts; some for their lady-like manners, which has saved their houses from plunder and themselves from insult; and still others for their dexterity in the use of the broomstick, poker and wash basin on Federal noggins. I always did love women better than men and for that portion around us my appreciation has quadrupled since the war began. Perhaps to their wise counsel and kind care I am indebted for the safety of my own noggin from the Federal sabers and balls. Many citizens of this part of the state have gone north, the most of whom are well rid. But many others, with whom we are loath to part, are running aways south to save themselves from murder and their property from plunder. There are but few of us now left and we may be driven away or killed.

In their last raid on 31st of July, the Feds dismounted our good neighbor, Mrs. Nolen, in the streets of Fayetteville, leaving her to foot it home and pack her saddle. They murdered old man Colfee near town and several others on Brush Creek and Illinois. They stole a march on our soldiers. The first we heard of them was their attack on the wheat thrasher at H. Davis'. They carried off the teams, our mule among them, took the hands prisoners. Kifer and son, Freyschlag and son, Banks and son (the boys being under 14 years of age), but released them all at the Missouri line on their retreat. They made quite a short stay, popping into town in the morning, were at our house on their return at 3 o'clock of the same day and searched it for soldiers and guns, but found none. I met them as I ever do with "How are you, Gentlemen?" The only attention paid me was "Howdy. Don't want you, old man." Our soldiers pursued them on their retreat, killed five at Walnut Springs in Benton County, and eight at Potts Hill near the Missouri line. H. Davis and son Anderson escaped in the morning from the thrasher and are now south.

As I will not be able to send this off for a few days, I will lay it away and write more when I have leisure.

R.W.M.

Saturday, 15th Aug. 1863

Since writing the above I have been quite busy and effected little. I needed my oxen to do some hauling, important to be done before the Feds should make another raid upon us. But my neighbors needed them more than I did. On Monday they made a turnip patch for Mrs. Cunningham, on Tuesday I loaned them for two days to assist in getting out our neighbor's wheat. The two days passed and no return of the oxen. The third and fourth, still they did not come. The fifth, this morning, I found them at old man McCormack's, when we had met to thrash his crop, the last in the neighborhood. Having set our thrasher and gotten out a few bushels, Mary Elizabeth, courier-like, came dashing up with an express that the Federals were certainly in Bentonville last night, were advancing in this direction and would be upon us immediately. All the men and boys left in the neighborhood were present. (Mr. McCormack, son Peter and grandson Irving, Martin Kifer and two little boys and myself.) We stopped the thrasher, called a meeting, had a hasty consultation, and believing we would be unable to defend ourselves and ponies with our pitchforks, each went to his own home.

Since coming home I have eaten my dinner and am now sitting at my north window writing and looking out for the Federals. This is the way we live: in a continual round of excitement, confusion and alarm from day to day. Wife is unnerved when danger is at a distance, but when upon us is herself again. Mary E. grits her teeth, looks daggers and will so many times blear out on them. Lou feels as her sister, but being younger and having no children to suffer and not being so injured by them in the way of property, has more prudence. As for myself, I am quiet and submissive, take no interest in what is going on, and am looked upon by them as a harmless, inoffensive old dotard. And indeed they are not far wrong in their opinion of me. For I still have that vertigo with which I have been afflicted for years, and since the war has been upon us, have been so confused and bedevilled that what mind I had is much impaired.

But perhaps I bear with as much patience and fortitude the loss of property, the toil of body and confusion of mind now being inflicted upon us, as do these peaceable secessionists, who, at the first approach of danger, ran away South to save themselves from harm and property from plunder. I blame no man for running to save himself and property but feel vexed at those who, to shed a halo of glory on the escutcheon of their own Southern loyalty, said all left behind ought to be hung as Federals. But perhaps they did not include old men like myself who were too stiff to run and too feeble to fight. I have always thought that those who ran into the army acted sensibly, for here it is a safer place than home. But those who ran to get out of danger and have left others to fight in a war which they did much to bring upon us, I think ought to have done better. I feel a happy consciousness that I did all in my power to prevent secession and its consequent, the war now upon us, because I then thought I could foresee the confusion, rapine and murder that would ensue and plainly spoke of it. But so soon as secession took place and the war was upon us, I believed that the South must be independent of the North or become her vassal. Being altogether Southern in birth, education and sympathy, I resolved to remain quiet at home. The Federals have not as yet int_____ my person, and hope will not. But enough of this. I will finish this letter in the morning.

Sunday, 16th Aug. 1863

Well, we are all up this morning again. The Federals did not come down upon us yesterday, nor have we heard more of them. Wife has gone to see Sister E. and before writing more I will step down and see Mrs. Nolen; perhaps she can tell us something of them.

Sunday, Aug. 23rd, 1863

On calling to see Mrs. Nolen a week ago, I found her sewing up her sheets, in which to hide away her wheat. She told me the Feds were advancing and would most certainly be upon us in a few hours. I called Wesley who was there in the kitchen with his wife, ran home, yoked the oxen and went to hauling our wheat to the house and putting it away. While putting away our third load, the Feds were firing on our soldiers in the prairie between us and the Murphy old place. We put away our oxen, ate our dinner and sat down to await the result of the firing. The Feds stopped at Mrs. Cunningham's and some of the officers got their dinner, told that they had killed and wounded three soldiers of our scout in the prairie. Several women of the neighborhood, may the Lord bless them, full of sympathy for the suffering, took their cans of water, satchels of drugs, lint, etc., and away to the prairie on foot in the hot sun. They went in search of the dead and wounded but found that no one had been hurt. The only injury done by the firing that was discovered was a jar of sweetmeats which Aunt Jane C. had in the branch below her spring which was destroyed by Federal balls. They took one wagon, the driver making his escape with the team. Our soldiers, being few and scarce of ammunition, kept themselves out of danger.

The greater portion of the Feds passed on towards Gibson to reinforce Phillips. A few of them and the Mountain Feds (Arkansas Unionists) have possession of Fayetteville and are said to be acting badly; destroying the gardens and plundering the houses for something to eat and wear. Some of the families that left in the spring with the Feds have returned. I have not seen them, but they are represented as a filthy, miserable, lousy pack of women and children and seem to have been in a state of starvation. But something is up. The family are running and calling "Pa! oh pa! Come quick! Do you hear that? Listen, listen! oh, how the guns pop! I do hope Brown is upon them."

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Sunday, 30th Aug., 1863

Another week is passed and my letter is not yet finished. I had been hard at work, all the cutting and putting up corn, stripping the fodder from my sugar cane, etc., and lay in bed till the sun was rising this morning. About the time I had kindled up a fire (for it is cold here) I was called out by Rindy. On going into the yard I heard a heavy firing of small arms in the direction of Holcomb's on the Wire Road. A fight, no doubt. The Feds left Fayetteville on yesterday and our partisan rangers are upon them. But I must tell of last Sunday's fight. It seems that Capt. Buck Brown with 120 men and only a few rounds of ammunition dashed into Fayetteville upon them; killed, some say 12, others 27, wounded many, took five prisoners, a few wagons with goods, shoes, boots, clothing and blankets, and a few arms, but having expended his ammunition, burnt the wagons and left in double-quick time for Ft. Smith for a supply, having lost one man killed and one wounded. It may be that he has got back and was on them this morning.

Sunday, 6th Sept.

It turns out the fight of last Sunday was not by Brown and his brave soldiers. Hunter's cavalry attacked them on the Wire Road between Holcomb's and Fitzgerald's. They retreated in confusion and disorder, never returning the fire. Their loss is put down by some at 40, by others 60 killed and wounded. Our loss was nothing. This force came on to Fayetteville the night after the fight in the morning, and have since burned down stores, fireproof store (court?) house and the Butterfield house, both having been used as fortifications by the Federals which were in the last time. If the war continues for a few years more, there will be but few good houses left in Washington and Benton Counties.

Captain Brown is back again. On Friday last he with his gallant boys and a portion of Kiff's (Rieff's?) and Jefferson's old companies fell on a company of Feds at Round Prairie in Benton County carrying the mail and bearing dispatches to Gibson. Killed 7, wounded 12, and took 23 prisoners, amongst them was their Captain; got an ambulance, a few wagons and nearly half their horses; and had 3 men wounded, none killed. Amongst the papers was a dispatch to Phillips to send Colonel Cloud up to whip us into submission at Fayetteville, so we may look out for more fun yet.

Monday, 7th Sept. 1863

I told you yesterday we would have more fun yet. It is upon us but not in the way we expected and much sooner. Last night about 8 o'clock we heard a noise at our gate on the north side of the lot. Wife and daughters burst into the yard to listen, telling me to lie still on the lounge. In a minute they returned much alarmed saying, "They are coming in, and are doubtless robbers; lie still, pa, don't come to the window." Mary Elizabeth ran to her room, stuck her hatchet in her belt and was back by the time they had reached the north window of wife's room. "Lie still, pa, don't get up" was the admonition given me while every head was poked out of the window. Just then I heard a low voice saying "Good evening; we want enough corn to feed a few horses." "Whose command do you belong to?" was asked by wife. The answer was "Captain Rieff's." When all as if with one voice said, "Come in." They did so by climbing up those high steps and coming through our north-west room now used as a kitchen. A large but clumsy man fell, rather than sat down on a chair, with the salutation of "How are you, Uncle Bob?" Springing from the lounge and taking him by the hand, "Don't recognize you." "Hamhock, sir." "God bless you, Tom _____. I am so glad to see you." The scare was over and all faces brightened up and the hatchet was laid away. Wife had milk, butter, light bread and molasses set for them. They sat down and seemed to enjoy their supper. While eating there was such a jabber, all talking at the same time that I could make out nothing that was said.

Yes, this much I did learn, that they had all been in the fight of Friday last and were each trying to answer the thousand and one questions asked them by wife, and daughters. After supper we went into the parlor — Hamhock, Will Curtis, Will Boyd and Gold of Pea Ridge, and never at any time have we entertained our guests with more pleasure. We were glad, not having seen a Southern soldier for many weeks. The propriety of music on the Sabbath was discussed. As the sun had long been down and it was growing late, it was determined that there would be no impropriety in a few songs. So Lou entertained them with Pike's Dixie, a few other patriotic songs, some of them of her own and Sister's composition. At half past ten o'clock I went with them to my corn patch, giving them food for their horses, invited them to breakfast next morning, wished them a safe and pleasant night's rest on their hard beds, returned to my soft pillow, commended myself to the care of God and was soon sleeping soundly.

At two o'clock I waked up by a low talk between wife and Hamhock. The first words I heard were "The Federals are in Fayetteville and are burning down the town; we heard the report of one cannon and a few small arms and we must find our camp." Wife gave him directions how to get to Sister Elizabeth's and they were off. By this time I had rubbed my eyes open and found wife much alarmed and so chilled by sitting at the open window that her pulse when she lay down was scarcely perceptible. She took large dram of apple brandy, and though \$5 a pint strong, it was a full hour before it produced a reaction. She is very feeble this morning, scarcely able to walk across the house. Such fun as this is not pleasant to any of us but worse on wife in her feeble state of health.

Just after eating breakfast I was standing in our back yard when Neb came running to me saying "You had better go into the house; there are two Federals at the gate." Stepping into the dining room and passing through wife's room, I saw through the window two fine-looking dragoons dash up with a jingle and rattle of spurs and arms; and at the same time saw Mary E. and Lou running down our kitchen steps both hallo-ing "Howdy, Cousin Albert, howdy. "Where are you from? Any Feds in Bentonville? So glad to see you." So it turned out to be A. Peel, one of the finest looking men in the Southern army and Mose Curis who had been in the fight of Friday last and had on Federal officer's coats which they had captured in the fight. They said they were going to the Arkansas River, so we will be left with Brown's and Inaham's (?) companies alone to protect us. Better officers and braver soldiers could not be left us.

Sunday, 8th Sept. 1863

It turned out that there were no Federals at the burning on Sunday night. It was done by Southern men, supposed, for the purpose of preventing the establishment of a fort by the Federals in town. All the houses on the Square were burned down. The Campbellite, Presbyterian and Methodist churches and almost every vacant house in town. Some of the vacant houses where their burning would endanger those having families in them were saved by the residents promising to tear them down. This work has already commenced and will be completed. There was no riot, no noise except the roar of fire and the screaming of women and children. One of Mrs. Daniel's houses was burned while the hospital was there. The other was saved though vacant, it is said for her kindness to the wounded soldiers and her true patriotism.

Davis came back after he and Anderson stampeded, took Susan and her children and husband (Rinnon's boy), slipped out in the night and have gone away somewhere south. Sister E. with her two little children and Delia have a lonesome time of it. The Federals have robbed Uncle Vince and Aunt Aggy of nearly everything they had. Sister E. was bringing them to her house so soon as she can. I have remained very closely at home, have so far avoided taking the oath and hope may still be able to do so. While Senator at the Call Session of the Legislature, I took the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States and will not, unless compelled, take the Federal oath. I have fared perhaps as well or better than most of those who went south, leaving their families behind. I have lost property but care little for it in comparison with the misery of being separated from my family. Some families have suffered much. Mr. Cunningham and his two sons, Lee and Dock, all went to Yell County, taking their families. Mrs. Cunningham and two daughters came back after a short stay. Since then the wives of both Lee and Dock have died, and Dock's youngest child, and a few weeks ago Dock himself was hung by the Mountain Federals, and a day or two since, Mrs. Cunningham received word that her husband was at the point of death with typhoid fever. Oh when will this unholy war end? I do hope with the year 1863. I am old, feeble and have but few days at most to live and suffer, but for the sake of my family, my friends and all others, I do want peace and independence for the South.

There has been a good deal of sickness in this part of the country. We have no doctor in the county, and very little medicine. Mary E. has a little and has been dividing it with our neighbors; all of them have had sickness in their families and she has been to see them. If she had the drugs, and would agree to do so, she could have a practice that would keep her busy while the sickness lasts. Her mother being sick so long has given her a practice in nursing and giving medicine; while the hospital was here she was much with the sick, and having read the books of practice left here by the surgeons of the hospital when they stampeded, she is really better qualified to administer medicine than some of our quacks. She and her sister went to town this morning with eggs to barter for salt. Money won't buy it. For six dozen they got two pounds. This is the way we make our living. Wife and Mary E. have furnished the little tea and sugar used by us, by carrying butter, chickens, eggs, and vegetables to town. Coffee cannot be had for anything.

Saturday 11 Sept., 1863

I have finished cutting out patches of corn, got my molasses from the mill and put away, and have cut my last plant of tobacco. If let alone we will have plenty of corn to do us and wheat too. But I have yet to find our meat. But we will have plenty of molasses to sop our bread; and I hope will not starve; and we have plenty of tobacco to keep us smoking, chewing, dipping, spitting and grinning for many days. I wish you could be here to enjoy with us our good new tobacco. Don't make an ugly face now at the thought of using grain tobacco. I have learned a speedy process of manufacturing it, which makes it quite pleasant when no better can be had.

Sunday, 12th Sept.

For wife I saddled our pony, one picked up by us last spring, and she went to spend the day with Sister E. When she returns I will close this letter long enough. It may be interesting to you; but from it you will learn a few of the thousand difficulties with which we have to contend in getting along, the toils, cares, anxieties, confusion and stress, both of body and mind, which we suffer.

Tuesday evening, 15th Sept.

Well, wife did get home from Sister E.'s on Sunday and that sooner than we looked for. While there about 4 o'clock, a regiment of Federal cavalry commenced passing up north. She ran to the smokehouse and with the assistance of Delia and Rindy, she saddled and mounted her pony, not to make an attack on the enemy, but to save her pony. She sat on it while behind the house, then moved back into the orchard to a better shade, keeping the house between herself and enemy. There with the assistance of Rindy she laid down the fence and they took their way through the large field west. The weeds were nearly as high as she was on her pony and much higher than Rindy on foot; but they weeded their way through. Laid down and put up a high heavy-railed, staked and ridged fence, and thence through the brush into the road leading by Mrs. Moore's and got home safely but much fatigued. She has not been so well since the scare of Sunday night 6th inst., is now taking medicine and I hope will be better.

Thursday evening, 17th Sept.

The Feds that run wife home last Sunday in passing told different tales. One was that they had given General Cabell a terrible thrashing, the other that Cabell had thrashed them out. Cannot tell which tale is true or whether either is. I cannot give you any news. We never see a newspaper. Seldom see any of our soldiers or any one else except those running away south to save themselves from murder and families from starvation.

We have had a very warm summer except the last week in August when we had frost. Last night we had a fine shower, the first since about the time I commenced these letters. Today the weather is cool and pleasant. The Lord is still favoring us - has given us time to gather up and secure little patches of corn peas, army beans, etc., and again sending rain. It is said that General Blunt has given orders to his soldiers not to kill any more of the Bushwhackers taken by them, because every one heretofore killed by them has raised at least in their stead of the one killed, five more to annoy them.

Wife is about as well as usual again; has been carding and spinning yesterday and today. The girls in this part of the country are making them Dixie dresses, grey linsey, for next winter. Lou has finished spinning hers and Jane McClain is now at our house weaving it. They are proud of their dresses and I am proud of them, and hope that when the war closes, but not before it, that each of them may get for herself one of the finest looking, most generous and bravest soldiers now fighting for the South, that will take good care of her and make her a kind husband and her days happy.

Sab., 19th Sept., 1863

Mary E. has not been so well for a day or two but is better today. Her children, though fat, healthy and fine looking, worry her much at night. She has had toothache and earache, sore throat, and pain in her side; but has been staying around making sweet things out of plums, tomatoes and syrup. Now don't say bah! We have no sugar. If you were here you would help us eat them. She has been picking and dying her wool; and can get no rolls. Will have to card as well as spin it, for herself and children's Dixie dresses. Jane McClane has finished weaving Lou's Dixie and she is proud of it. Next week Lou will put in and commence weaving a piece of cloth for our Darkies. Our own and Mrs. Nolen's, two old things at Mrs. Cunningham's and Delia are the only negroes left in our parts. They all seem to be enjoying themselves finely. Our own have done well when we consider the influences which have been operating on them to get them away from us. They have, as yet, had plenty to eat and have perhaps done enough work to pay us for it. We give them their clothes and good advice gratis. They have so far done well and we hope will continue worthy the trust and confidence we place in them. Wesley does a little work for me and a little for himself, smokes and chews his new tobacco, spits, struts, gasters around with an air of independence not known to the common soldiers of Lincoln's army; and really enjoys more freedom, ease and comfort than any of those darkies who went off with the Federals.

We have heard that Mr. Dinsmore is in the army. When you write him, tell him to write me and give me his whereabouts that I may write him. The family join me in their wishes for your safety, health and happiness. Please let me hear from you soon.

Sunday, 27th, 1863

On Sunday last I read your letter to wife and daughter, enveloped it hoping, before this time that it would be on its way to you, but am again thwarted. On Monday and Tuesday I worked very closely, stripping the husks from the corn in one of my patches preparatory to hauling it in. On Wednesday morning before it was clear daylight I was in the patch loading it up. The morning was beautiful and very pleasant, and my heart was drawn out in gratitude to Him who gives the sunshine and showers to make the grain, and dry pleasant weather to gather it in. Just as the sun sent his first glim morning rays through the dense forest east of us "to cheer the heart and gladden the eye", my ear was stunned by the hateful roar of Federal cannon in town and ere its echoes ceased to reverberate in our hills, the shrill notes of the bugle struck up, accompanied by the band playing some merry making, gigamores of a Yankee song in exaltation at again having possession not of Fayetteville but of its ashes and the ground on which it stood. All my hopes of laying up plenty for the winter and enjoying it with my feeble wife and daughters, my orphan grandchildren, and darkies were knocked into pie. If the Federals establish a post in town, the Rebels will be here too and there is not enough grain here to make bread for either one of the armies, much less for both, and it will be the business of each to destroy our scant stores to keep the other from enjoying them. There are but few of us here, yet I fear we will suffer with cold and hunger before the winter is over. But hold —

Sunday evening 27th

This morning I was stopped from writing by three Federals whom I saw dash up to the brick building and gallop round it. Tom January and two others of Benton County. Wife had just left to see a sick child in the neighborhood. I ran into her room, gave the keys of the building to Mary E. and Lou who ran with all speed to open the doors before Tom should break them. Before they could get there he had tried the strength of the north door with the end of a long piece of scantling, but failing dropped it, ran round to the other side, mashed in a window, pitched through and ran upstairs. By this time Mary E. had opened the doors on both sides of the house and was at the foot of the stairs waiting his descent. As he came down she met him with a polite "How are you, Mr. January? Is there anything in the house you wish to see? I have brought the keys and opened the doors; we do not wish them broken for it is difficult these times to get them repaired." Tom came the balance of the way down with a wiggle and twist, shrugging his shoulders and with a silly grin and guilty cough stammered out "We are ordered to break open all houses we find locked and examine them."

While Mary E. and Lou were inquiring after their officers whom they told him had been frequently to see us while in town last winter, their mother having heard the pounding on the door and saw the running returned to see what the matter was. On riding up she said, "I think I have seen you before." Mary E. said, "Mr. January, mother." "Oh yes, I see badly, but now recollect you; you ate dinner with us and supper at another time last winter. Did I not treat you kindly? I am so sorry you did not ask for the keys. I had just started to see a sick child, but the running and noise so excited me that it has given me a violent headache and I must go and lie down and give over my visit."

The boys went off, not finding anything in the house. Not feeling like writing for a spell I took my Bible and was trying to understand by reading the Prophecy set forth in the 38 and 39 chapters of Ezekiel which some have said is now being fulfilled in the present war, where Gog the chief prince of Mesheck and Gubal is represented as coming from the north pass against the mountains of Israel. In this war "Every man's sword shall be against his brother" but if this be the ware there foretold, the end is not yet. Read and see. May the Lord in His infinite mercy put it into the hearts of all, both North and South, speedily and sincerely to repent and we will then have peace.

Well, before I had finished reading those two chapters, four Federals rode up to the gate on the north side of the house and seemed to hold a consultation, came up to the little gate north of wife's window and asked her sitting there if they could get some dinner. She said, "We have but little and your chance for dinner poor." They said, "We want only milk and bread." "Get down then and walk round to the front door." They did so and she met them in the parlor. They conducted themselves decently, ate their (no our) milk, bread, butter and syrup, returned to the parlor and had a low talk with wife, then left. When they first came in I laid down my Bible, went into the parlor with a polite "How are you, gentlemen?", took a squint at them, returned to wife's room, took up my Bible and turned over to the 12 chapter of Romans, not to learn my duty as a warrior, but as a Christian. This is

the way we get on. With an assumed cheerfulness to save ourselves from plunder and insult, we give away the bread for which our poor children must in a short time cry. If we had what we have given away to the soldiers of both armies for the last two years, we would have plenty to do us till next spring without touching our scant stores on hand. We who have stayed at home have suffered much and may be made to suffer much more. But I have no fears of starvation. The Psalmist says "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and _____ thou shalt be fed."

Sunday 11th Oct. 1863

We are still getting on. Though confined to narrow limits. We have to keep moving to get something to eat and wear. Early on the morning of the 28th inst., Mary E. was called to see Wesley at his wife's house. On the night before, being violently attacked with typhoid pneumonia, was unable to get home. After examining him she went to Fayetteville, got a permit, saw the Federal surgeon, got medicines from him, got a pass and came home.

Since that time she has a hard time. She has been quite unwell herself. Staid some half dozen nights with him, gave medicine to her own three children and one of _____ that were sick and have been called on nearly every day for medicine and advice by our neighbors. Wife has had a bad cold and was complaining. But will be complaining while there is any spinning and knitting, etc., to do. She cards as long as she can stand and sits down, fills quilts, lies down, knits and reads, then up and at it again. Weak and feeble as she is, she does more work than most women who are stout, and reads doubly as much as those who do no work.

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making fine church music. I have been pulling, hauling and husking my corn and putting it away for our bread. Worked a little too much like a young man and am pretty well worn out; but hope I will be better when rested. We are all on our feet again except Wesley. I was to see him this morning. He is much reduced but with care will get well.

Colonel Shelby and Coffin passed up north some five days ago with their men. A large scout of Feds from Fayetteville took after him. We have heard that they pitched into Granby (the lead mines), took what they could find. Shelby passed on towards Springfield, Coffin to Quantrell N.W. They took Neosho in their march and burned it. The Feds in Fayetteville say their scout is hard after Shelby and will certainly get him and his men. Can't tell, but will find out by waiting.

It has been remarkably still and quiet all day. It is now three o'clock and we have not seen or heard of Federals today. Something is up. I know nothing of our soldiers, but suppose they are taking care of themselves and doing the best they can for us.

On Sunday evening 27th of Sept., I received a letter from Mr. Dinsmore written in July. In it he asked a great many questions, which I would answer if it would be of any service to him. But after he reads what I have written and will continue to write till an opportunity offers to send this, he will be able to determine what he can and what he ought to do. He is too young and full of life to live as I do, submitting in all things to the military power over us. Never was Roman inquisition more severe on the heretics than are our provosts on all rebels and those who sympathize with them or harbor them. Were they to catch me away from home and did not at once kill me, they would put me in the guard house away from my helpless family, there to bear the scoffs, sneers and fiendish vulgarisms of a wicked brutal soldier, until I should take the oath of loyalty to Mr. Lincoln's government. Many have been compelled to do it. I wish to avoid the compulsion. Loyalty! Oh I hate the word as much as I do BUSHWHACKER or SECESSION. Now, in a legal sense one might be obedient to their military law, but who that was born, raised and educated in the South can say that in the present war, all his sympathies are with the North; and it requires this much to prove his loyalty. I, who am entirely south in my feelings and sympathies, to avoid difficulty stay closely at home. Most all my dear friends are in the South and I have hundreds of old students in the Southern army and only a few in the Northern, but were it reported to the provost that I had given one of them a piece of bread, a night's rest, or even been seen talking to him without making report to the provost, I would be punished. They have kept away from me and I thank them for it because I have an affectionate regard and solicitude for their welfare as they do for mine.

Tuesday 13th Oct.

*I thought on Sunday, something was up. It continued still all day yesterday. No galloping around of Feds, no guns heart shooting our hogs and chickens. Yesterday evening a scout of about one hundred Rebels passed by our place on towards Mt. Comfort and about the same time another scout of about the same number passed through _____. I was suffering with lumbago which from the excitement made the pains more severe. Mary E. went down to the road, hailed some of them to know what was up. Lou cried and laughed, the negroes grinned, then not Feds. Had they all been imprisoned for a year they could not have manifested more joy at seeing the jailor coming with his keys to set them free. They passed on to Mr. Nolen's; the road there runs close to the house. Mr. Nolen and daughter, Miss Pittman and Aunt Jane Mc_____ all ran out with their half bushels and buckets of apples and pitchers of water, halloing Whose company? Where are you from? Where are you going? Can't you drive the Feds from Fayetteville? They passed on towards Mt. Comfort saying to them that the women of Washington County are the best Southern women in the Confederacy and that they would do all they could for them. We have not heard from them since. We think they are watching for the return of the scout that left Fayetteville in pursuit of Shelby and Coffin. I think we will have a fight in a day or two. Have not seen any passing today either Feds or Rebels. This morning wife borrowed a horse and rode it to sister Elizabeth's to loan it to her to go after a tub of clothes at the _____ and will take care of her house and children in the meantime and expects to return home tonight. This is the way we get on. About one pony for every twentieth inhabitant in the country.

Sunday 25th Oct. 1863

We have had exciting times since the 1st of this month. Both armies are in the country eating up the little bread and forage a few old men and women have been able to make. I have seen no Rebels since the evening I last wrote you. I must tell you about some of our troubles. Having walked out a few hundred yards from the house and returned, two little boys with me, before getting into the house Mary E. ran out to me saying "Pa, go into the house; don't you see those men dashing up with their pistols in their hands?" On going into wife's room I saw through the window a scout of men that we supposed to be Mountain Federals had surrounded Lou and Mary E. running to her assistance. But by the time she reached them they had put up their pistols and I saw Lou shake hands with them. They came up to the house and Lou filled their pockets with apples. They then went off towards town. It seems that they had seen myself and little boys walking down the road and thinking it Federals had dashed upon Lou to make her tell where we had gone. But when told who we were and who she was, they put up their pistols, assured her they were Southern men good and true and not to be alarmed they would not harm her nor her father. As they returned they were heard to say they had had a merry time; that they had driven the pickets into town up the hill within gunshot of their breastworks and were nearly falling from their horses laughing about how the poor devils were scared, and skedaddled when they fired on them. This was about sundown.

The Feds flew to arms, mounted their horses and set on them all night expecting an attack. There was one charge that this scout made as they were leaving my house for town of which I must tell you. When they had reached the road at the end of the lane looking across the prairie they saw some one coming towards them. Wheeling to the left with pistols drawn, away they went full tilt a full half mile upon Miss Margaret McCormac who was coming over to her brother's. Dashing up to her they called her to a halt. But not heeding their order, she wheeled to the right about and with rod and heels applied to the sides of her pony she put it at full speed and gave over her visit till another time. They had supposed her to be some Union woman going into town to report them to the Feds as they saw her coming from the house which they had just passed. But learning who she was on their return to camp, they called on her and made satisfactory apology. Such as the above incidents are of daily occurrence all around us.

The Federals say that they will be able to hold Fayetteville now, as the leaves are falling from the trees and the bushwhackers will not be able any longer to annoy them. But they may fail to do so for bushwhackers here have grown to importance.

Hear a part of a song sung by some of our girls to the Rebels who have on their scouts called in for a bite to eat:

"Miller started out upon a great scout
With three hundred men to sustain him;
With eleven brave men, Brown stood in Hazel Glen
And chased him from the happy land of Canaan."

Now this same Buck Brown who had collected but eleven men to dash through the stony hills and hazel thickets of Benton County, intercept, fire on and put to flight well-armed squadrons and regiments of Federals, now commands a Battalion of men rendered desperate by the cruelties inflicted on their families by Federals. Some of them have had

their father and grandfather murdered by them, some their brothers, some their sons, while others of them have had their chaste and innocent sisters and daughters insulted by the lascivious wanton brutal soldiers of the Federal army. Their families at home are reduced to want and misery. Everything to eat, wear and sleep are taken from them and many of them destitute of shelter, their houses being burned. Last Sunday a scout went out to Major Brown's camp on Osage Creek to see what they could carry off and destroyed everything else; and then left ten men to burn the house. When the fire was applied, Mrs. Brown told them that the bushwhackers should have fifty of them to pay for the burning. The fire was put out.

Their Chaplain, a Northern Methodist, was with them, and in his zeal for the cause for which he prays pitched at the women of the family and tore the sleeves from their dresses. Now men whose property has been so wantonly destroyed and whose families have been so savagely treated must fight; yes, they will fight with desperation. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." It may not be the Lord's will that Major Brown's men shall inflict the penalty on those savage officers and soldiers for their deeds of cruelty, waste of property and murder, yet they will be punished.

I stay close at home, yet hear much flasehood and perhaps a little truth coming from the Feds. I often think of what David says in his 39th Psalm and try to profit by it. "I will take heed to my ways, that win not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked are before me."

I have seen no Rebels since the days after the pickets were fired on by the Rebel scout that passed our place. On that day some hundred passed through the prairie, about the same number by our spring. Mary E. and Lou ran out and howdyed to some of their acquaintances. Passing Mrs. Nolen's the road runs close to her house. She and her daughter Miss Pittman and Aunt Jane McClain ran out with pitchers of water and half bushels of apples distributing to the wants of the poor fellows who often suffer with hunger and thirst as well as fatigue. They stopped only for a minute and went on in high glee saying to them as they bid goodbye that the females of Washington County were the very best women in the Confederacy and that they would do all in their power to drive the Federals away from them. I cannot tell where they are gone nor what their designs are.

For a few days after they passed we had quiet, heard not the sound of a gun nor saw one of them. But again they began to pass around as _____ chickens, turkeys, hogs, sheep, cattle, even milch cows and their sucking calves. I have been told that our prairie land has enough of wool scattered over it, if collected and spun, to clothe both our families. Some three or four days ago a company of some half dozen of them got a hog hemmed in our lane by the spring. Net was there washing and wife went down and looked on while the bullets whistled around her till they shot some dozen times. She hollered to them "Don't kill the hog; we are living without meat." But so intent were they after their game that they could not hear her. Having failed to get the hog down with all their shots, they knocked it on the head with stones, butchered it and went off toward town bearing themselves proudly, as a company of young hunters would have done with the meat of a buffalo or a grisley bear which they had captured. Since then we have had very quiet times, and I think there may be Rebels about.

Tuesday Nov. 3, 1863

On Thursday morning last I yoked up the oxen and assisted in loading the wagon with corn, apples, vinegar, a few dozen eggs, etc., and away Mary E., Lou and Net to town to exchange them for such articles as we need. I am truly a fortunate old man; have no son in the Rebel army to bring the wrath of the Federals down upon me and still more fortunate to have a wife and daughters who can attend to and supply our pressing wants. I dare not leave home and they can attend to what is needed to be done.

Last spring during the fight at Fayetteville a Federal Captain met Wesley in the prairie and took Mary E.'s fine mare from him. Having learned that he was in town she went to him, told him she was a Rebel's widow, that she and her orphan children were barefooted, that she herself was in bad health, needed medicine, that he had a fine mare of hers and that she now appealed to his generosity as a gentleman for the price of the mare. Without hesitation he gave her a receipt for \$70 government price.

Harvey Stirman, Captain Cline and an acquaintance in the Federal army endorsed it for her. She got a permit to trade, sold her voucher to the Federal _____ and has furnished all the family, white and black, with shoes to keep our feet from frostbiting, a little coffee, tea, sugar, salt, etc. All this she effected in one day, which is more than anyone else here has been able to do in the same length of time. Who would not be proud of such a daughter? She could have obtained the mare by reporting the Captain but had the prudence to get what she could and save her old father and our property, by making friends rather than enemies.

Monday evening, 2nd Nov. 1863

It rains this evening and I will write you for a spell. We had a snow a few days ago, but it is warm again. We are as well as usual. Wesley is able to walk about and eat full rations, but will perhaps not be able to work any this winter. He has a bad tumor on his right shoulder which our doctress, Mrs. Endbright, thinks has been caused by the disease with which he has been afflicted. She still has two cases of typhoid fever in Mrs. Nolen's family, but has gotten them on the mend. She has been quite successful in her practice and I hope she will have no new cases. Her own health is not good and it has not been improved by the fatigue she has undergone in waiting on others.

Aunt Aggy came to our house last night with Mrs. Palmer and a Mrs. Read, going up to Fayetteville. They have a little greenback and was going to furnish themselves with cotton cards, a little coffee, tea, salt, etc. Aunt Aggy says she and Uncle Vince are getting on tolerably well; have not again been disturbed by the Federals. Vince needs a jacket with sleeves and wife will send the jeans out to make it.

Wife was at Sister E's yesterday. Her health is good as usual and she is getting on about as well as her neighbors. I have as yet been able to do her milling; and hope that I can continue to do so. Lizzie and Delia have gathered their crops of corn by packing it on their backs in bags and baskets. The Federals have taken some of her beeves allowing her 2¢ per lb and underestimating the weight. She has a few left which she is selling to the citizens of town to keep the Feds from taking them. It has been very quiet for two days. It has ceased raining

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attempted to move when his wheels ran off and spilled the balance of his apples and poor Jake returned home without apples or money. This is but one more in the chapter of Net's trip to Fayetteville.

Oh, the wickedness of that proclamation proclaiming freedom to the slaves. The curse on the negro is and must continue to tenfold greater than the slavery to which he has been accustomed and for which he was designed and fitted by his creator since the curse of slavery was pronounced on the descendants of Ham. The loss of property by the master is but a small item in the account.

Thirty-five years ago I advocated the emancipation of the slaves on the plan set forth by Clay, _____, and others; and contributing finely until those narrow-minded, jealous abolitionists of the North sprang up and sent forth their colporteurs with their tracts to spread their views of emancipation. At that time the more reasonable men of the North and South looked on their plan as absurd and ridiculous, gotten up to thwart them in colonizing their own slaves, but they were quiet. Others more hasty, when they saw the villainy of their plans, became furious and opposed them strongly and bitterly, thereby giving them strength and importance until they _____ were the stronger party; and since in power they have produced confusion, wickedness, misery and blood unparalleled in the history of nations. It has reserved for their leader, Mr. Lincoln, to issue that proclamation productive of so many evils already upon us, and which will continue to produce subsequent evils under which many of the white, as well as the black race, both north and south, will writhe in pain for the next half century. The author of this proclamation will be looked on with contempt by our posterity as long as an impartial history of our times is read.

Thursday 9th Nov. 1863

I am feeling badly this morning. Some ten days ago I cut my finger and having a good deal of work to do got cold in it and have a very sore hand. On yesterday I attempted to plow, preparatory to sowing my wheat, but had to give it up on account of the pain it caused me. Last night I was up with Mary E. who had an attack of cramp colic and feels quite dull. She is relieved and is creeping about but looks badly.

I have not seen a Federal for two days. On Tuesday they were attacked by the Rebels in some four places. Their forage trains was fired on by them southwest of Fayetteville. On White River their scout was run in. Their pickets north of town were fired on and scout of some dozen men were driven from a house just below Mt. Comfort to town. They then were reinforced and came dashing back swearing vengeance against the nasty, filthy, dirty, ragged Secesh; but did not find them on their return. They report having captured a hat, a gun and one horse, and supposed they killed our men. We heard on yesterday considerable firing south of us but have no report as yet. They are fortifying on the high hill adjoining Fayetteville on the north. We have learned from some of the Rebels that have been in, that the Federals have abandoned Ft. Smith and Van Buren and are fortifying at Logtown two miles north of the river. Times are bad enough here, but I fear they will be worse before the winter is over.

A few nights ago Mrs. McManus returning from Cunningham's just after dark was called to a halt, but not heeding the command was fired on by the Federal picket at the corner of her own field, not far from our house. The ball passed very close to her but she escaped being hurt. When she told who she was and where she had been, with a very wicked oath they cursed her, telling her she ran about too much and must stay at home more closely. (page missing here)

From their accounts of matters, the Federals are not so well pleased with their prospects as they were a few days ago when General McNeal passed north. They told us that he said that he had driven Brooks and Shelby beyond Arkansas River. It now appears that they have been all the time east of us, had a fight on Crooked Creek with McNeal and drove him back. Lord, Lord, how the Federals are given to lying!

On yesterday morning a dispatch came in for help, saying Brooks was in the neighborhood of Huntsville and was using some of the Federals roughly. A reinforcement left while they were there, which I have learned from two Feds now at our house, encamped on the middle fork of White River last night sending back for more help, saying they were still too weak. On yesterday, seventy Mountain Federals came dashing into town and we cannot account for the firing south of us a few days ago. They had been attacked by a portion of Brown's men on Fly Creek near Cane Hill. Six had been killed, some wounded and the balance driven to Hog Eye on the rim road and thence made their escape to Fayetteville. None of the Rebels were hurt. _____, one of Brown's lieutenants, had his horse killed under him by a man named Sam Reed, but quickly retaliated by severely, perhaps mortally, wounding Reed and capturing his horse and arms. Deserters have been coming in for a few days back, telling wonderful yarns about their bad treatment by the Rebel officers, their want of bread and clothes, etc. But after getting themselves comfortably clad and well equipped they have again deserted.

Sunday 15th Nov. 1863

We are as well as usual. Wife, though ever unwell, has been at her wheel and cards for the last week with as much interest and activity as a girl of sixteen, and has finished spinning a web of fine Confederate gingham. She will put it in the loom this week, and soon we will see her neatly clad in her homespun. I cannot say that she will be proud of her dress but this I can say, I will be proud of her.

I am feeling better and my hand is getting well. I have been taking medicine to purify my blood, which has been in bad condition, and if there be one drop of black Republican in me, I hope the medicine will clear it out. I don't like it. It is too uncharitably cold. I shall have to furnish wood to keep us warm this winter and I will need some warm blood.

We have had a very quiet time for the last week, have seen no Federals since last Sunday, except two who passed me on the roadside when I was wood whacking. I did not recognize them but they did me by saluting me with "How are you, Uncle Bobby?" Had they been Rebels, they would have said Uncle Bob, leaving off the endearing termination of "by". But at that time, if I had been found with a gun instead of an axe, trying to shoot a hawk for carrying off our chickens, or a squirrel, prairie chicken or turkey to get a little meat for my family, I would have perhaps been shot down as a bushwhacker, or at least taken prisoner and sent to the guard house and my murderer or capturer commended by his officer as a valiant soldier. "O tempora, O mores!"

Monday evening 23rd Nov. 1863

I have been chopping and hauling wood most of the day. It now rains and I write. The last eight days has been a week of stir, uproar and confusion, all around us. Many hogs, cattle and sheep have fallen by Federal balls, some in the woods, others in the pen fattening for the mother's and children's meat. On Sunday last a squad of Federals went to Mr. Brown's, an old lady residing near Mt. Comfort camp ground and shot one of her hogs in the pen fattening. At the firing of the gun she ran out, seized a large club and placed herself between the Federal and the hog. "You have killed my hog", said she, "but you cannot carry it away." They cursed and threatened her, but she stood her ground and defied them. When they found that she could not be intimidated by threats and ugly words, one of them went into the house and commenced tossing her bedding about and kicking her sheet of wool rolls over the floor, expecting thereby to draw her away from the hog. But finding that she still stood fast with her club, he returned as near as it was safe for him, turned his ugly end towards her, pulled down his pants and emptied his bowels of stinking load in her presence. "Now, sir," said she, "You have made a dog of yourself. I am old and not thus to be abashed, for all my life long I have always seen dogs go with _____." Upon hearing which the fellow quickly rose, buttoned up, and left for his quarters. Sending for help, the old lady finished butchering her hog and salted it away.

Among the Federals here there are many men who are gentlemen and who condemn the perpetrators of such unfeeling and brutal conduct, but there are others and not a few equally as bestial and void of sensibility as the fellow spoken of above.

On yesterday there was much shooting around us and several houses in the neighborhood were searched. Those searching say they are looking for arms, but not so, they are hunting for something to carry off. During the last week there have been many deserters from both armies, some coming from the Rebels and giving themselves up. For what purpose I cannot tell. Others, principally those who have been taken prisoner by the Federals and forced in their service, have deserted. One man whom they had taken prisoner and given his choice to be shot or join them, deserted, taking away five revolvers and two others of the soldiers with him. Another, a lad of sixteen, the son of a widow whose paternal relations were Rebels, had been brought to town and given up to the Federals for their army, deserted, taking off five horses loaded with blankets, boots, etc.

The Federal pickets are fired on nearly every night; some killed, others wounded. The bushwhackers bear the blame, though by some the copperhead Federals are suspected of having a hand in the matter. Yet I believe the suspicion is not just. Skirmishes are taking place around us almost every day and a few are killed and wounded, about as many of the one as of the other as reported by the Federals. There is a report amongst the soldiers of the Post that they are to be removed to Fort Smith and their place is to be supplied by a negro regiment. Some of the Arkansas regiment whose families reside in this part of the state swear that if this be done, that they will desert to the Rebel army -- cannot think that they will do so.

A scout left Fayetteville on Saturday for Springfield for horses, saying they could not drive Brooks from the country with the horses on hand, poor and broken down, because his soldiers are furnished with the very best of horses. It was reported yesterday in town that Shelby was again in Missouri playing smart with the towns, soldiers and citizens. In his former raid a few weeks ago he went as far north as the Missouri River, burning five towns, taking and paroling many soldiers, taking at one place \$75,000 and at another \$40,000. In this part of the South be in bad fix. Everything upside down. No guerilla warfare ever carried on in Mexico or any of the South American republics has been fraught with more evils than that now waged upon us in northwest Arkansas. Theft, plunder, arson, murder and every other crime of the black catalogue have lost their former startling significance of horror by their daily occurrence amongst us. If we hear that one of our neighbors has been murdered, his house burned and family left to freeze and starve to death for the want of clothes and food, it is soon forgotten by us.

Two weeks ago a scout of some seventy-five soldiers passed by us saying at Mr. Cunningham's home that they were from Fort Scott and going to Fort Smith. They came through the western part of Benton County burning houses and committing murders, amongst others Uncle Davy McKissick met his death. He fell on his own hearthstone, shot all to lint by them. Aunt Peggy too old and feeble to drag him away from the fire, begged the assistance of his murderers but it was denied her.

In their passage through our county on the Cane Hill road, they called at a house near our prairie place and asked the woman where her husband was. She told them in the South. They said to her, "She lied; that he was bushwhacking, but here was her son and they would kill him" -- a boy 10 years old. And while she was begging them to spare the life of her little boy, Frank Woody was passing the road up to Fayetteville. Upon seeing him, one of them said "Yonder is a man; he will do", and they shot him dead without halting him, passing on towards Rhea's Mill. Among others they killed was Billy Morris, a cripple from infancy. They killed a Federal whom they overtook on his way to see his family, having got a furlough for a few days. This was done by mistake in their eagerness for blood by not halting him. A few nights since, a man by the name of Burks, an _____ ill-natured farmer residing three miles northeast of Fayetteville, was murdered by a scout of five men, his family turned out of doors and his house burned. It is not known who were the perpetrators. His wife says they were Federals. Some say they were Rebels. Cannot tell. He was a man over fifty years of age, had taken the oath, and had busied himself much in reporting to the Provost both Rebels and Federals who did not comply with military law. Thus we live, not knowing when we lie down at night that we will be let alone till morning. I have to look very closely in keeping my family comfortable and attending to the few stock of cattle left us. Have never yet hid from the enemy, lie down early, commend myself to the care of God, and sleep quietly and soundly.

Wife was gone yesterday to see Sister E. She goes as often as she can. Sister E. has a lonesome and hard time but gets on as well as any other could under the circumstances as she is. Having two sons in the Rebel army and husband and one son in the South is calculated to bring down Federal wrath upon her. Mary E. is often in town for such things as we need, and though known to be a Rebel's widow, seems to be popular with both officers and soldiers. It is now near sundown and I must make my fires and feed. Two large Federal trains passed today, one from the North, the other for Ft. Smith.

Monday, One o'clock A.M., Nov. 30, 1863

We have a very sick family. Lou had just lain down and I have gotten up to administer the medicine till daylight. All our children, white and black, have been sick and some of them still require attention. Mary E. from fatigue is waiting on them and other sick around us, is down. She has had Tic Douloucous (?) for several days and on yesterday evening had a congestive chill and we have to watch closely that she have not another. Though the family has been much afflicted I feel very thankful that the Lord is still keeping us in good warm rooms and comfortable beds to rest on. Hundreds of families in our part of the country have been deprived of both. For a few days we have had very cold weather and there is much suffering in N.W. Arkansas for wholesome food and for comfortable rooms and clothing.

It is now 5 o'clock. Mary E. and her youngest has taken most of my attention, but are now resting quietly and seem comfortable, but the dogs are barking furiously on the lot. I have been out, could see nothing but heard the tramp of horses' feet. Probably a patrol hunting bushwhackers. Maybe a band of robbers as they are quite plenty around us and have done much mischief, or perhaps bushwhackers hunting pickets and scouts. Things are moving on as they have been for a few weeks back. A few Rebels coming in and turning themselves over to the Federals deserting. Three companies of negroes passed down to Fort Smith last week. There was a lieutenant with them, conscripting such as were unwilling to join. They got some five or six, all of whom they had to take off in strings. One fellow they ran down, caught and tied his hands together, also his feet, then placing a rail between them he was carried swinging in this painful attitude to the guard house by two buck negroes, amidst the shouts and roars of laughter of officers and soldiers. Would Southern soldiers act thus? I hope not. He was asked by the recruiting officer if willing to join. He said No. He was put in the guard house and told if unwilling in the morning he should be shot. Such eloquence as this seldom fails to persuade. Hundreds of the recruits in the Federal army, both white and black, have been made willing to join them by this kind of eloquence. But it is now daylight and the sick are still quiet. I must make my fires and feed the few stock still left me. Goodbye.

Sunday, 6th Dec., 1863

Time rolls on and to me more swiftly than at any former period of my life. I am kept very busy all the day. The nights are long. I lie down on a comfortable bed in a good warm room, sleep soundly, rise in the morning refreshed and feel thankful to him who "defends us from all dangers and mischief and the fear of them." Mary E. and the childreh are all up again and she has today been to see some of our sick neighbors. Wife was complaining last night of being unwell but has gone today to see Sister E. She works too much for her strength. Mary E. and Lou went to town yesterday to see the Dr. and get medicine. Mary E. rode a poor lame U.S. horse that had been turned out to die and which she had picked up and resuscitated a little. Lou was on a small pony for which she had traded a few days ago. On their way home, in passing the pickets, Mary E. was dismounted by them and left to foot it home though scarce able to bear the fatigue of riding to town and back again. Lou did most of the walking, thinking her pony too weak to carry both herself and sister. Neither of them seem any worse from their fatigue. There were some half dozen women dismounted on yesterday from U.S. horses which had been broken down and turned out to die. I cannot tell why they do so unless it be to oppress the women all in their power. It is tyranny with a vengeance. The horse they took from Mary E. was poor, barefooted and swinnyed and had it not been for the attention she gave him in feed, would have died. But our women are bad customers for the Federals to deal with. On yesterday morning they had ten of them in the guard house for slipping by the pickets and carrying news. In the evening eight of them were released and two retained for a few days till they have atoned for their crime. The Federals here say the Southern women here are the most industrious and remarkable women they have ever met with, that they keep their husbands and sons comfortably clad in the army and themselves and children neatly dressed in homespun and seem afraid of no one.

During the last week we have had stirring times, the war trade is brisk about us. The nasty, dirty, filthy, ragged Secesh keep the federals moving and the bushwhackers almost every day stop the movements of a few of them, though I have never seen or known of a bushwhacker in our immediate neighborhood. Large trains with heavy escorts are moving to and from Ft. Smith almost every day. The report here now is that Price is advancing on Little Rock. Cannot tell that it is true. We can never see a paper, either Rebel or Federal, and are in darkness as to what is going on except immediately around us, and it does seem that the jig is pretty well up with us. We are completely under Lincoln's galling tyrannical yoke in this part of the state. Our men are narrowing down every day. The few of us left here have no means for resistance; our forage, bread, stock, beds and bed clothing taken from us continually. A train camped near Sister E's on Thursday night last, took ten hats from old man Williams in Skelton's shop, sent a wagon to the neighborhood east and brought back before the night was passed filled with bed clothing. One of the company was heard to boast that he had taken a fine shawl from the shoulders of a feeble old woman and left her shivering. Some of the Federals from town robbed old man Smith, the gardener, of his money. The old man seems very much mortified at their conduct, being a strong Federal himself.

The Federals, in burning the woods for bushwhackers, have burned up much fencing. Mrs. Moore and Freyschlag have suffered much from their fires. Sister E. has had some fencing burned; not much. The fire passed through her field and orchard and burned a few of her garden palings. While she was out saving her property from the fire, a band of Federals were at the house shooting and carrying off her chickens. What brutes!

Two companies were sent out to guard Van Winkle's mills while they sawed lumber to rebuild Fayetteville. On Thursday last while out foraging, the bushwhackers (they say) burned it down. A scout has been sent to Benton to drive the Secesh out and another to hunt up some Rebels reported as being on White River. Skirmishes are of almost daily occurrence. Bushwhackers bagging their game while the Federal Indians west of us are murdering and plundering. Truly the trade of war is brisk and you would think, if I could tell you one-tenth of what occurs around us, horrible. The arch fiend could desire nothing more.

December 25th, 1863

For the last fortnight I have been very busily engaged in labors rather heavy for an old man of three score and seven. Was quite broke down last night but am somewhat refreshed this morning though suffering much with pain in my back. The balance of the family have their usual health. Have been as busy as myself, but being younger are able to endure more. Your Sister Louise enjoys better health than she has for last twelve years and is heavier than she has been for a long while. Mary E. is again about as well as usual, though not stout. Her children are well and noisy. Lou is well and a terrible Rebel. She cards and spins, knits and reads, sings and plays her Rebel songs, some of her own composition, and often zests them with so much patriotic fierceness as to so alarm her mother that she is stopped, lest our Union neighbors or the Federals riding the road hear her and report us to the Provost and we be punished for such open rebellion.

Most of the country are dressed in their Confederate gray and very anxious that the Rebels should return and be able to drive the Federals away, not for a short time but for all time to come. They have suffered much and many of them are suffering for want of bread and clothing, having been stripped of both. There are bands of robbers passing through the country in the night, blacking themselves, who carry off bed clothing, wearing apparel, etc. A few nights ago they were at most of the houses in the neighborhood of our farm, robbing. Many poor children on the next morning did not have clothes or shoes to put on. On White River the women have united themselves in companies for the protection of themselves and property from Federal robbers. Mrs. Dickson, a daughter of old man Van Hoose, is at the head of one of these companies. How they are to be armed, I have not learned. Mr. Carnahan and his family returned from Arkansas River a few days ago where they fed for safety about the time you left here. When the Feds got around him on the river he returned to his place here. He took some _____ or ten negroes off. None but his white family returned. Two of them left him a year ago, one of them has been killed by a Federal for the want of politeness. The old woman, his mother, the balance of her children and grandchildren left after the Feds reached the river a short time ago. The old woman that left him gave as her motive for leaving, that she must go where she could get wheat bread and apple pie.

29th Dec., 1863

I have still kept moving but with great pain till this morning I concluded to rest a day or two. We have had some very disagreeable weather, rain and snow, freezing and thawing. I have been much exposed and am well nigh worn out. But here comes two bully-like Federals. I must stop till they leave us.

Well, they have gone. They asked for dinner, got it eaten and said Thank ye to Mary E. and left whistling. Wife and Lou were at McCormack's on a visit. Those two bully Feds who have just left say their regiment is ordered to St. Louis and the Arkansas 1st Infantry are to be left here. I fear we will be worsted by the exchange. They told us that many of their soldiers would desert rather than go to St. Louis. But they lie so that I set it down that the last one of them will go willingly. Some of them are now in the woodland east of us cutting timbers to build stockades at Fayetteville. Wouldn't be surprised that they may be cutting fire wood, but will know by waiting. (But here is another Federal.) Well, he has gone. Got his dinner, ate a dozen of apples, talked prettily, nursed the children, wished to see Mrs. Mecklin. Wished a pair of her fine yarn gloves. Said he would be back on Sunday for the gloves, and bid goodbye. And I reckon that he will say thank you when he comes again. Wife has knit some very fine gloves, ornamenting them with pretty stripes on the back and around the cuffs, which she has sold to some of the officers and soldiers for money to get a little tea, sugar and salt.

December 30th, 1863

My time is spent as regularly now as when teaching. I rise one hour before day, make fires in wife's and daughter's rooms. That done, sit down in an easy chair, lean back, try to look wise while my head seems as light and empty as a gourd, chew tobacco and spit in the ashes till the first dawn of day, then wake up Net and Rindy, walk out, feed our two ponies, calf and pigs which we keep in the smoke house and yard, then crawl up to our chapel, not as formerly to read the Bible to my students and pray with them, but to deal out with economy what straw and chaff to one old yoke of steers, a few old cows and as many yearlings, then back to the house, prepare for breakfast and eat it. The balance of the day is spent in chopping and dragging up firewood, cutting it up and attending to such matters as are to be done on a small farm during the winter. By the time the day's work is done, I am worn out. Sit up as long as I can, go to bed, sleep soundly and up and at it again.

I kept closely to the house yesterday. Only out at feeding time and feel better today, but am still resting. It was warm and clear yesterday but rainy today. Some of the negro conscription officers are still about us, running down and carrying off such of them as have been still left here. Two of them were at McCormack's a few nights ago after a sprightly boy of sixteen. He kept himself concealed. They remained till midnight. They told the young ladies of the family that they wished to get all the negroes they could and would be glad to place them fifty deep between themselves and Rebels. It seems from the treatment so far received by the negro in the army that many have been freed from all trouble, labor, pain and sorrow in this life.

Was it the object of the military dictator in his proclamation announcing their freedom to place them in positions where Rebel bullets would colonize them in a country where neither his private purse nor the National Treasury should be taxed to pay the expenses of colonization? Should he reach the colony to which he by his proclamation sent them, will the meeting of liberator and liberated be a happy one? Will they in unison sing the songs of joy and triumph at their liberator from slavery? Or will they each meet the other in deadly hate, criminating and recriminating each other in an eternal warfare? These are questions to be answered not in time, but eternity. But the descendants of Canaan never have nor ever will secure for themselves that freedom enjoyed by the descendants of Japheth. Though assisted by the infidels and misguided abolitionist of the north, they never can reach a state of freedom. More than four thousand years ago the Lord pronounced the curse of slavery on them. Since then they have been servants and so will continue perhaps to the end of time. The Lord in his goodness and mercy has so constituted them that they enjoy more liberty in the state in which they are placed in the South than if free in the land whence they came, have better opportunities for religious and moral culture and an altogether happier and more enlightened (life) than the free negroes of the north. There are individual instances of cruel, tyrannical masters in the South which should be remedied by civil law and all is done that is required. So far as concerns myself, I never did, do not now, nor ever will, I think, desire to own a slave beyond the negroes of the family. But enough of the negro.

January 2nd, 1864

On the 30th ulto. while writing I was interrupted and had to cease writing. It was then warm, the wind blowing from the south, and raining briskly. By 12 o'clock that night, it was snowing, the wind blowing from the north and very cold. It continued snowing all that day, was clear yesterday but one of the coldest days we have had for several years. There is much suffering amongst the soldiers, as also amongst both Union and Rebel women and children. I saw one Fed with his ears and fingers frost-bitten. One boy driving a wagon for a Federal forage train was so badly frosted that he will, it is thought, die. There are doubtless hundreds will die from the cold of the 31st ulto., as the change was so sudden. Many families, both Union and Rebel, are without houses and sufficient clothing for even a moderate winter. The weather is moderating today, yet it is cold.

January 4th, 1864

It continued cloud and cold on yesterday. Today it has been some colder, still cloudy, and snowed several showers. I am still in a good deal of pain but move about, make our fires and feed our stock. I am still kept ignorant of most that goes on around us, know nothing of the whereabouts of the Rebel army. Scouts are going out frequently from town and returning. A forage train came in on the 1st inst. Some of them frostbitten. Said they had been in the neighborhood of Huntsville, that the Rebels got after them and ran them back with but little forage. A Captain of a scout of some 125 men got back on the 2nd inst., said the Rebels 100 in number attacked them in Searcy County, that we lost 16 soldiers killed and had they not run, the Rebels would have gotten the last one of them. His company did not return with him and I have not yet learned whether they have yet arrived.

The bushwhackers are still whacking away, doing all they can. About one mile below Mt. Comfort a squad of them took a Federal Captain and one of his soldiers since this cold spell of weather has been on us. He had gone home to enjoy the comfort of a good warm fire, but was taken from it. The Rebel prisoners at Fayetteville have doubtless suffered much since this cold spell has been on us. On the night of the change they were removed to fires in town. One of them, an old man, was so far gone that they had to carry him to the fire. On Christmas eve the bushwhackers near Holcomb's took four wagon loads from the Suttons in town, with salt, clothing, sugar, coffee, whiskey, etc. One of them before daylight had reached Sister Elizabeth's and asked for a hat, said the bushwhackers had taken his boots, hat and overcoat, paroled him and sent him off. She poked an old hat out of the window for him, which he took and passed on. We have had stirring times.

Sunday, 10th January, 1864

Since the 31st there has been no thaw but intensely cold and freezing all the time. Today the sun shines more warmly and I hope we will have a change. Our poor stock is suffering. Though we have but few, yet we have not half enough of forage for them. Since this cold spell has been upon us I have been busting up corn cobs and boiling them to feed some of our cows that we expect to give us milk next summer to keep us from starving. This, with a little wheat, straw, nor half enough, is all we have to feed them. Many others are in worse condition for want of forage than we are.

The Federals are oppressing those families who have relations in the Rebel army much more than we have yet been oppressed. A scout came in from the southwest part of Benton County on yesterday, bringing six prisoners with them, and some horses. They say they shot one man, left him for dead, but that he got up and followed them to a fire which they had built up a quarter a mile from the place where they had shot him. They say they were kind to him, carried him half mile to a house, left him and think he will get well.

There is a woman living in our brick building who has three sons in the Federal army. We have opportunity of frequently hearing the tales which they tell when returning from their races after the bushwhackers. It is fine fun for them, when they have spilled the blood of the bushwhacker — but when they are beaten, some killed, wounded and prisoners by the bushwhacker, the tale is quite different...and the fun much less.

Sunday, 17th January, 1864

Another week has passed and the winter is still quite cold and disagreeable. There was some thaw on yesterday, but it is colder today, cloudy and has the appearance of snow. Wife has not been so well for the last week. Some of the children have chickenpox. Lou is complaining but is up. Mary E. had toothache yesterday, is better today. Net, her children and Rindy are well, fat, saucy, and feel much inclined to make declaration of their independence. Wesley is well, still with us and hauling and chopping our fire-wood for his board. This takes but a small part of his time, the balance of it he spends sitting by the fire smoking his pipe while it is colder; when warmer, he is out building his traps and catching prairie chickens and partridges, which he carries to Fayetteville for sale.

They are now pressing into the Federal army all negro men over 18 and under 45 years of age. I am expecting any day when they will take Wesley. He is fat and works well, but is really not stout enough for the service which he would undergo in the army. If they do get the fellow, I will feel sorry for him, but not for them, if he is able to make his service as valuable to them till the end of the war as they have been to us since it began.

My own health is good as it has been, and well enough for old folks. I still know nothing of our army and hear nothing except what my family learn from the Federals who call on us; and they will not tell me anything which a forgetful old man ought not to tell again. I learned yesterday that the bushwhackers had taken nine prisoners from the company of a Federal who called on the family and two from another company. Four Rebels in passing on Friday last took prisoner and carried off one of the sons of the woman living in our brick house. I strongly suspect the bushwhackers are quite strong in this part of the country. There have been two of the Federals called on us, one yesterday, one today. They made a short stay on hearing that the Rebels had taken a prisoner from here on Friday last. We should perhaps save some of our bread and meat.

A few days ago some of the Federal soldiers came to Peter McCormack's living on the Dr. Dean's place, tore up the barn floors and commenced on the wheat garner, to tear it down for the plank. Mrs. McCormack attempted to stop them but could not. They ran into her house and took a new blanket which she had a short time since bought. She laid hold of it to wrest it from him, but the soldier pointing his revolver at her husband telling her if she did not let go he would kill him. She let go but laying hold again, he made the same threat. She again released her hold, got on her horse, went to the Provost, reported them, got her plank hauled back and them put in the guard house. She told the Provost that they were the filthy, thieving off _____ of the Rebel army that had deserted and such as they would not have amongst them, and that the Rebels were better rid of such a thieving set.

Tuesday night, 19th January

The family are all improving that have been sick. I feel quite worn out this evening but hope will be refreshed in the morning. Oh how I am bedeviled. There were four Federals here today and two of them were to dinner and remained till nearly sundown. I saw them only while we eat dinner (only two were to dinner). We have but little to give them but as much as they ought to have.

Wife has been to see Sister E. today. Her family are well and still have bread and meat to eat. The Federals have had their prisoners cutting timber east of us on Mrs. Moore's land for their stockade in Fayetteville. One of the prisoners on yesterday getting close to this guard struck at him with his ax but in dodging the stroke the guard fell over the brush and before he could get up the prisoner was out of his sight and made his escape. Two others were guarding I _____ Edwards _____ and one of the young Noblets of Benton County. Their teamsters got hurt and one of their guards took the team, giving the other one of the guards his gun. The prisoners got the guard to take them to Mrs. Moore's that they might get some clothing which their families were there to leave for them. While there, Mrs. Moore set some victuals and asked them to eat. They sat down, the guard setting down his gun. I. Edwards feigned sickness, rose from the table, seized the gun, told the guard he was their prisoner, handed one of the guns to Noblet and they two marched him off to the camp of the Rebels.

There are two Federals in wife's room now, come in since dark. In attempting to talk to one of them (a big black-looking fellow), wife pinched me and Mary E. made an ugly face at me. I thought of what Solomon said, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself but the simple pass on and are punished." So I just got up and hid myself in daughter's room where I have written a page, and wish they would leave, for they are in my sleeping room. (Good night) R.W.M.

January 24th, 1864

Time rolls on, but times are no better. So far as the thousand and one privations, difficulties, hindrances, etc., with which we are surrounded relates. We have had two days of fine, pleasant, thawing weather and nearly all the snow is gone. The geese and cranes going north reminds me that spring is approaching and that it is time to be preparing grounds and fences for a crop. But when this is done we have no teams to plow our grounds, and if we had the teams no forage for them. We still have a little to eat ourselves and have to divide that little with those who are worse off than we are. When that little is gone something will happen to us, but I cannot tell what it will be. The old book says, "Trust in the Lord and do good and thou shalt swell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." This is comforting.

Wife and Lou have gone today to see Sister E. who has no means of getting from home herself and becomes very lonesome. Lou rode her pony and wife an old skeleton which she picked up after it had been left to die by some of the teamsters, and which I have been giving a little corn and some wheat straw to revive it and make it able to plow when the spring comes on. Net and Rindy piled on their _____ to the size of a small stack of fodder this morning, borrowed Mr. Yarboro's old mare, as lean looking as death in the primmer. Net mounted, one child in her lap, the other behind her, and off they marched to town, Rindy leading the way wriggling and twisting. I strongly suspect they have a notion of leaving us. Though it would be a little more drudgery for Mary E. and Lou, times would be more pleasant. They do not pay for their board by their services and their impudence is not bearable.

I am quite unwell today, have some fever. Shall take a dose of medicine tonight.

Thursday 28th, 1864

I am quite unwell yet, have been able to do but little this week, have taken medicine, but cannot get enough of it. The weather has been quite pleasant out. The blue birds singing seem to say You ought to be at work, but I could not. Wife and Lou got home safely Sunday evening though wife's pony, from weakness, fell down both going and coming. She has been quite so well for a few days as usual, but can stand more hardships than she has been able to do for the past 12 years. This morning she has been hunting a couple of heifers strayed and has gone to Sister E. this evening on business. Yesterday she was at our farm looking for these heifers and all over the neighborhood, and the day before that she was at Mr. Kimbrough's six miles and back, and all this by herself. Don't you think she is a woman of some energy?

I was right in my opinion of our darkies. Net and Rindy came home Sunday evening. On Monday morning Net went back and returned in the evening, fixed up and moved her things to Fayetteville — has gone to cook for Mrs. St _____ who gives her and two children their board and \$2 per week. She had been trying for a long while by every act of disobedience to provoke her mistress to drive her off. But at last had to leave us all cheerful and pleased to get her away. Wife gave her and her children meat and meal to live on till she should be able to make something. Rindy has cleaned up her kitchen very neatly and seems to be getting on well in doing our cooking. She and Mary E. are washing today and Lou is cooking. Since Net is gone it will not require more than half the meat and bread to do us, and I do hope that none of Abe's abolition minions will put it into Rindy's head that she would do well to leave us. Wesley is still getting wood and going to mill for me to pay for his board. I cannot tell what his notions are. I must talk to him.

Mrs. Palmer who lives at the old homestead in Hazel Glen was at our house to dinner today, to get a yoke of oxen and Wesley to drive them to Benton County to carry the corpse of her son Tom there for burial. He was taken prisoner and confined in the guard house at Fayetteville. Took a chill on the 22nd and died this morning. A yoke of oxen strong enough to make the trip could not be procured in this whole neighborhood.

There has been a few days of quiet. Not much news. There were a few more of the prisoners made their escape from the woods when they were cutting timber, the bushwhackers destroying the wagons and taking off the mules with them. Captain Galloway started down to Searcy a short time since with over a hundred soldiers to punish those Rebels who run Captain Worthington back, killing sixteen of his men. Two days ago he returned, having lost all his company save eight, saying that the woods are full of Rebels down there. (Over 90 of the 100 killed, wounded and prisoners.)

A few nights ago the robbers went to Dr. Talifero's and robbed his house and burned his feet with a hot shovel till he gave up his money. They did old Johnny Rich the same way till they got his gold and silver. I would think that the devil enjoyed greatly the roasting of the feet of an old man over eighty years of age till he gave up his money in anticipation of the feast he and his imps will one day have in roasting in the fires of hell those who used the shovel to obtain a little money. The good book says, "The love of money is the root of all evil" and so it is. The love of money, and not the wish for reunion, peace and good government, caused Lincoln to proclaim the negroes free; and no proclamation ever issued by a president of the United States has been and will continue to be fraught with so many evils. If himself had not this filthy desire in his heart, yet the outside purpose which brought forth this proclamation did. Whether those who _____ it were of the cabinet, of _____, of the army, of the navy, of the farmers, the mechanics, merchants or even day laborers, all did so with a desire of increasing their own passion of money. The love of money and not a desire to do right will continue this war till the Lord of all brings it to a close. I cannot see how he will do it, but to him alone is the task. After he has sufficiently punished us for our sins, both North and South, he will show us.

Friday, 29th January, 1864

I am somewhat better today than yesterday. Am very feeble taking quinine but not able to do more than attend to my poor stock. Mrs. Mecklin is still cow hunting and gone to see the sick. (Miss Ann McCormack). In her round, I have very little hope of her finding them, for I think they have gone the way our horses, hogs and some of our cattle heretofore went. But encourage her in looking for them because it will improve her health.

Sunday evening, 31st January 1864

The weather is still warm, had a very heavy rain last night and some heavy showers today till twelve o'clock. I am still quite feeble, scarcely able to get about and attend to my stock and make my fires. Quinine does not seem to give me strength as when younger. I still have vertigo which has nearly destroyed my mind; but I do feel thankful that the Lord has given me strength and patience to pass through the many difficulties in my way since the war has been upon us.

Being disappointed in getting a yoke of oxen, of which she has the promise, Mrs. Palmer came to our house on Friday last again in great distress. I let her have mine to bring the body of her son to our house. They were very weak but made the trip. When it arrived, the women of the neighborhood had assembled. They brought the box containing the corpse (for it had no coffin) into the house. The poor afflicted mother, though deeply distressed, seemed to rejoice that she had gotten the body of her son away from his enemies. On the next morning (yesterday) before it was light, Mary E. got on our pony and set out in search of a team and wagon to carry the body to Benton for burial. About nine o'clock she returned, having provided a strong yoke of oxen at one place and a wagon at another. The poor afflicted mother, with Wesley to drive, and one of her neighbors, a woman of 66 of Benton with a very poor pony in a buggy and an Indian boy to drive her, left immediately, dreading the robbers by the way. This is one of the hard cases of daily occurrence around us in N.W. Arkansas. But there are hundreds of others, tenfold harder to be borne by mother and sisters. They hear of the death of their sons and brothers, of their excruciating suffering from wounds and sickness, but cannot see them and administer to them, and cannot tell how or where they have been buried. There is a comfort and consolation even to drop the tears of sorrow on the graves of our friends and plant the grass around them. But this is now denied most of those whose friends fall in war. An old Baptist preacher by name of Bra_____ was wont to say in his preaching "that men in their natural state were half devil and half brute." It does seem as if he was right in his description, that most men in the old United States are still in their natural state.

Thursday, P.M., 4th February

Weather cold since 1st inst. Not too cool for season. I am not so well. Had a very sick spell last night after eating my supper. None of us well. Have been _____ to great extent, Broke up our rest by not getting to sleep enough. Night before last we were roused by men hollering in the yard and asking admittance into the house. Wife asked Who are you? And what is wanting? They said That man in your house. She told them there was no man except her husband, a feeble old man, in the house. You will have no objection to our searching your house, said one of them. That will depend on circumstances, she replied. Another of them said in a very preemptory tone, Open the door. Open the door, we have no time to stay here all night. She told them she must have time to put on her clothes. But before she could do more than throw them over her head and light a candle, Merinda had opened the door of the kitchen and three of them came rushing into our room with their pistols in their hands. By this time I was wide awake. Wife pressed the candle to me assuring them that I was the only man about the house. When a great big overgrown Indian-looking fellow said We don't want you, old man; but stooping down, picked up my pants and feeling in the pockets as he advanced towards the parlor door. Wife sprang before him saying For God's sake, don't take my husband's pants for they are all he has, and he gave them up. Mary E. and Lou hearing their mother beg for the pants supposed she was begging for the life of their father, rushed into the room half dressed, Mary E. with a hatchet and Lou with a carving knife for my defense. A parley took place and being assured that nothing should be disturbed, Mary E showed them into all the lower rooms of the house except the long dining room, and they left. On examining my pockets, my knife and pen-maker were gone, but I felt quite thankful that we had fared no worse. The fellow who robbed my pockets as he passed out left my penmaker on the kitchen table.

On leaving our house they went next to Mrs. Yarboro's, living in our brick building, and knocked at the door. She having three sons in the Federal army, two at the post in town, and one at home on parole, thought it one of them and let them in without a word. They searched the room in which she slept but no other and took the soldier's blanket, clothing, etc. of her son's and \$2.50 in money from the one at home on parole, and left, firing off a pistol, we supposed as a signal to collect their band.

I lay awake an hour and went to sleep again. Wife and daughters, I think, none slept during the night. Early next morning before the sun was up we learned that they had been to Mrs. Gunningham's before she had lain down and took a soldier's blanket from her. Next they came to Mrs. Nolen's and found Jim _____, her brother-in-law, there. From him they took his hat, shoes, overcoat, \$100 in Confederate and \$50 in Federal money. Next in their route they came to our place and passed up to the S.E. corner of our field to Mrs. King's, living in Tom Moore's house. There they took the cape of her husband's overcoat, he having the overcoat with him in the Rebel army.

From this place they passed north across the prairie to old man McCormack's. Here they found four men from the neighborhood of Cincinnati who had been up to Fayetteville trading and on their way home,

robbed them of their hats, boots and overcoats and threatened to kill them, accusing them of bushwhacking. But Miss Margaret McCormack defended them, placing herself between them and the muzzle of robbers' pistols. The robbers then attempted to take the blankets on which the men had been sleeping. Miss Margaret saw this and spring to the middle of the pallet, claiming the soldier's blankets as her property and dared them to touch them, brandishing her fist in the faces of those who approached her and set the hair of one of them on fire with her candle. They left, carrying off what they had already gotten. Miss Margaret has the credit of saving not only the lives of her visitors and their blankets, but their pocket books which they had hidden under their pallet, and a sack of coffee, tobacco, etc., which they had bought in Fayetteville and which she had hidden on their first appearance. She told the robbers that she was Victoria's subject and would do and say what she pleased and dared them to touch anything. Hurrah for Miss Mag.

We are all up, but not so well since our disturbance by the robbers. Wife has gone today to see Sister E. Lou was there on Friday last and reports all as well as usual. Lizzy came home with her and went back with her Aunt this morning. By the way, Lizzy is a sprightly, well-informed girl of twelve years and bids fair to make a very finelooking woman.

We are at a loss to tell anything about who those robbers were. Some say they were Federal soldiers, others that they were Rebels, while some think that they did not belong to either army. They took nothing from the families when the robbing was done except soldiers' blankets and clothing. True, one of them took my old pocket knife. But, poor fellow, whether Federal or Rebel, I expect he had been cutting with his fingers and needed a knife to cut his meat and bread. I can do without it. I have another which will perhaps last me as long as I shall live to need it if not taken from me. Jim Work at Mrs. Nolen's and those four at McCormack's all living in the same neighborhood and all coming out here in the evening. It seems that it was what they had and not the property of the families with whom they were lodging that they were after.

It is now five months since I have been beyond the hearing of the playful romping of our grandchildren. True I did last week cross the branch over into the prairie to look for a cow but wife went along to protect me. We did not get beyond the view of our house. Don't you think I will desire to make a visit before long?

The business of killing men still goes bravely on. Scarcely a day passes during which we do not hear of one or more bushwhackers being killed or that some Federals having been killed by them. Last week the Federals made a raid out in the neighborhood of Cross Hollows killing four men, one over eighty years of age, and brought in some prisoners. During the last ten days they have brought in several prisoners, such, I understand, as have been giving aid and comfort to the Rebels. Or, rather such as have been so reported to them by their Union neighbors.

On Thursday last, I sent a few sacks of wheat to the Elm Springs mill. A Federal scout was there and took one of my sacks of wheat. I could not get my grinding done and fear that they will take all my wheat. Things are still growing more desperate in N.W. Arkansas. While my mill boy was at the mill the Federal scout killed one of the Garrets living on Osage Creek. His brother was with him but made his escape. Those who have the hardihood to say they sympathize with the South are hunted down in the woods and killed like wolves. Many of them at the Post in Fayetteville are those who deserted the Southern army and being naturally bad men, have an inver hatred against those who still cling to the South and hallo for freedom. Rebels being no better men than those who hunt them down thirsting for their blood take every opportunity of killing them from behind the rocks and trees. How all this matter will end no one can tell. We are, however, assured by the Federals around us that in ninety days the South will be completely subjugated, Richmond taken, and all peace.

Alexander Winchester Dinsmore

Alexander Winchester Dinsmore was born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 26, 1820. He was graduated from Washington & Jefferson College in 1838, then taught school in Virginia and Kentucky from 1838 to 1849. He married Katherine Anderson, daughter of Col. Hugh A. Anderson of Benton County, April 22, 1847, and went back to Kentucky. He returned to Arkansas in 1849 and located at Cave Springs, where he established a commissary and built the first cotton gin in northwest Arkansas. Here Hugh A. Dinsmore (named for his grandfather) and James H. Dinsmore were born. He then moved to Bentonville and opened a mercantile business. Here Grace, Annie and Eddie Dinsmore were born.

A. W. Dinsmore was a member of the Arkansas constitutional convention of 1861. Although born in Pennsylvania, he was sympathetic with the Southern cause. His wife Katherine was an invalid at that time and he moved the family to Texas, where he became a Procurement Agent for the Quartermaster General of the Confederacy. After the war he returned to Bentonville and re-established his business.

He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church U.S. and helped establish the church in Bentonville. While the church on West Central was being built, he went to Philadelphia where he purchased the bell, stained glass windows and furniture for the church. The pulpit furniture is now in use there. In the infancy of the state university he was named a member of the board of trustees by the governor, and for a number of years devoted much of his time and energies to its interest.

He was president of the People's Bank of Bentonville when it was robbed by Henry Starr in 1893. Alexander W. Dinsmore died at the home of his daughter, Grace Dinsmore Watson, on February 17, 1894.

The children of A.W. and Katherine Dinsmore were: Hugh A. Dinsmore, who served in Congress for 12 years and was U.S. Minister to Korea from 1877 to 1891. He practiced law in Fayetteville and was a Trustee of the University; James H. Dinsmore, who moved to Texas where he practiced law; Eddie, who died young; Grace, who married Edmond Penn Watson; and Annie, first married to Sam E. Davis and after his death to John A. McClure of Oklahoma City.

Edmond Penn Watson

Edmond Penn Watson was born at Van Buren, August 31, 1848, the youngest son of William Albert and Christina Crews Watson, who came to Van Buren in 1847 from Lynchburg, Virginia. After the father's death in 1852, the mother moved the family to Fayetteville where E.P. Watson attended Arkansas College and later read law in the office of Major W.D. Reagan. He was admitted to the bar in 1869 and moved to Harrison to practice. He was elected to the legislature in 1871 from Boone County.

He moved to Bentonville in 1872. He married Grace Dinsmore, daughter of A.W. Dinsmore and Katherine Anderson Dinsmore, on December 11, 1873. Their children were: Clarence, who died in infancy; Katherine; Mary W. (Polly) and Rebecca D. (Dolly), twins; Grace; William Winchester; Edmond Penn Jr.; and Charles Clement Watson.

Edmond Penn Watson was elected to the lower house of the legislature from Benton County in 1877 and to the state senate in 1879. He was commissioned Major in the Arkansas militia in 1874 and promoted to Colonel in 1889. He practiced law in Bentonville from 1872 to 1930 and was for a number of years president of the Benton County Bar association. He died August 20, 1930.

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